



BNT

TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE
Bicentennial
NATIONAL TRAIL

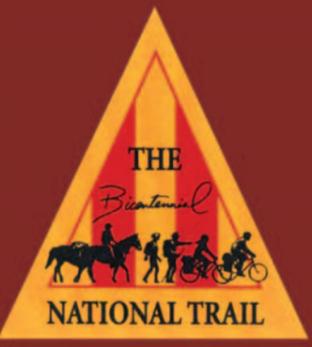
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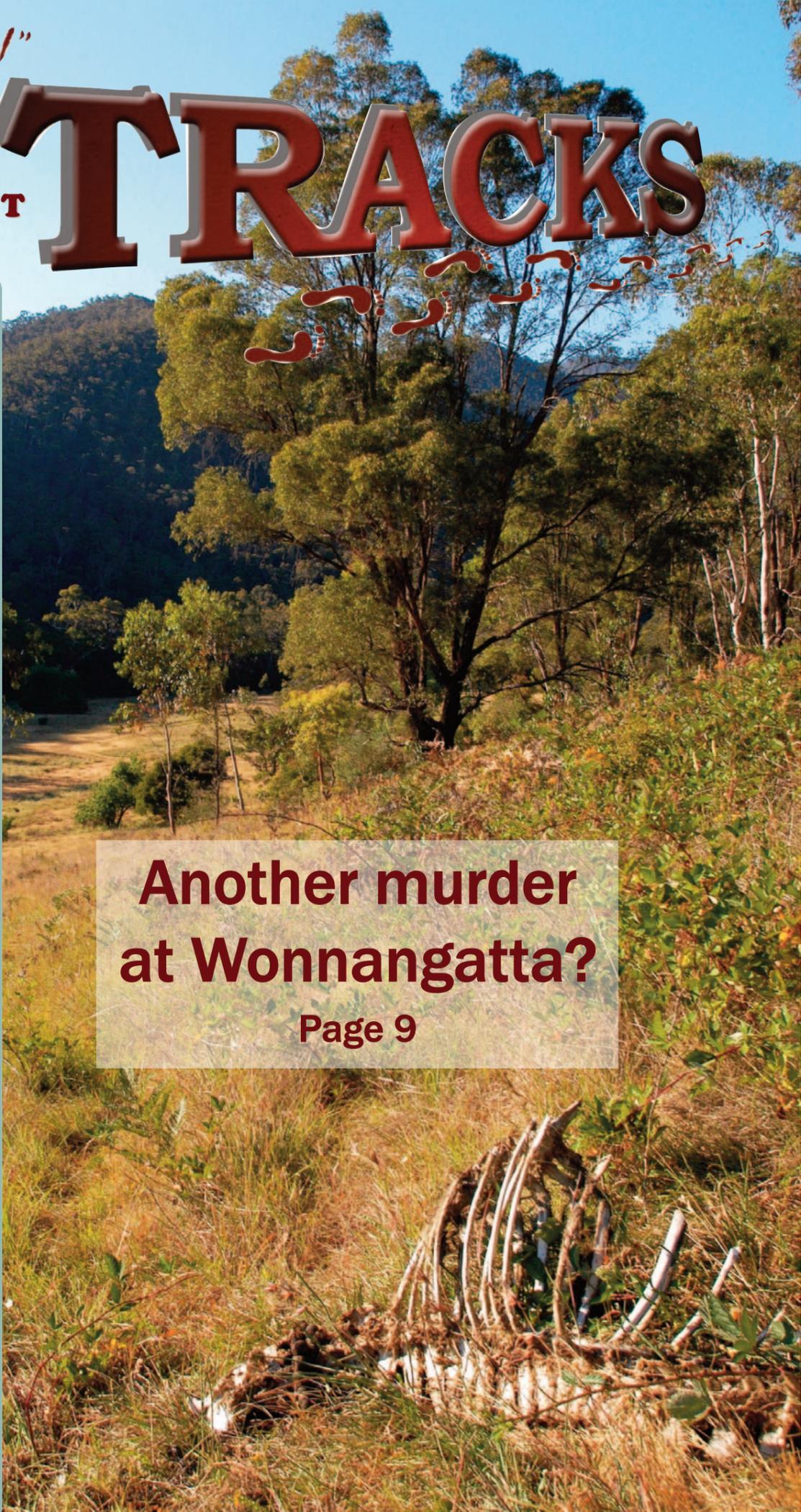
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September 2020



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Letter to the Editor

HI, MY name's Glenn Smart and I tried to complete the BNT a few years back. I made it to Cooktown eventually and the journey there was quite an experience.

While searching the park for the trail marker in Cooktown, which is a harder task than it sounds, I found a bloke waiting by it.

"You should take a job on the boats," he says. "This trail's not for you."

Actually so did the section coordinator, by the time I made it to Innet Hot Springs the mob was calling the cops on me.

Shows they have good judgement of character because I seen from a distance what wholesome people find along the Bicentennial National Trail and it's more than a nature trail, it's a network of Australians' mateship and spirit.

This is the point!

The BNT is an established network of people that spans the east coast of Australia and if that's not what you're after then make your own tracks any which way you want.

From the Chair



BNT Chair Neil Ward.

THE BOARD acknowledges the difficulties many Australians and people from around the world are currently experiencing.

We do, however, hope that at this time the National Trail and the adventure, natural beauty, solitude and friendships it represents can inspire optimism and fuel our Member's aspirations to explore our iconic Trail. Thoughts of journeying along the Trail can be a beacon when we all need more fresh air and time in the bush.

As Aldo Leopold once said "It is, by common consent, a good thing for people to get back to nature."

Welcome to the first electronic version of our Tracks magazine. As explained in the March 2020 edition, the purpose of the magazine is not changing.

We anticipate that this new electronic format will allow our members more flexibility in how they access the content while at the same time saving our small organisation considerable printing and postage costs.

It's that time of the year when we start to put the gears into motion in preparation for the AGM. Short of a global miracle, this year's meeting will be an electronic one due to the restrictions associated with Covid-19. We have three Board positions becoming vacant.

I would like to urge members to throw their hat in the ring to help drive the future direction and management of the National Trail.

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The new digital BNT TRACKS

WELCOME to the new digital BNT TRACKS magazine. Bowing to the inevitable, the BNT Board has made the decision to go digital after 10 years of the highly-successful print version.

The Board chose to stick with the A4 format and the current design and layout. The body typeface has been changed to Arial and the font 11 point for easy on-screen legibility.

The PDF platform is best viewed on a regular home desktop computer with the popular 24 inch monitor, and your PDF reader set to full screen, thus seeing a double page spread.

For iPad, use PDF Pro 3, free on the App Store. Hyperlinks to further resources are highlighted in colour in the text. Click on the pictures to view fullsize.

For those wedded to a printed copy for reading, sending or saving purposes, the magazine can be printed out. We recommend a laser printer – cheap home inkjet printers tend to have very high ink costs.

Nevertheless, the most important thing about the magazine is the content, so please continue to send in those great adventure stories which have made BNT TRACKS such a successful magazine.

News



National Trail on navigation app

NEGOTIATIONS have begun with navigation app Guthook Guides for inclusion of the National Trail in their list of trails.

The state-of-the-art app will be useful while on the Trail as well as for planning. Please refer to the Chairman's message on page 21.

National Trail members are encouraged to download the Guthook Guides app, which is free, so the Board can get feedback on how well it will be received.

What's in a name?

A PROPOSAL to change the name of the BNT from Bicentennial National Trail to National Trail will be considered at this year's Annual General Meeting.

The BNT started back in the '70s as the National Horse Trail, but was changed to the Bicentennial National Trail when a Bicentenary grant of \$200,000 was accepted.

Since then, the two names have been interchangeable, with much signage saying National Trail, but anything with the trademark on it showing Bicentennial in an elegant script and all corporate documentation, including the company name likewise.

When the BNT website was created, it was registered with the domain names of both, but with nationaltrail.com.au being the most favoured because bicentennialnationaltrail was so difficult to type and read.

It is now felt that the word Bicentennial is outdated and not readily understood by younger generations.

Those with greater ambitions for the old BNT will be pleased the name change may usher in plans to extend the Trail beyond the Healesville to Cooktown route, perhaps even right around Australia, and become truly Australia's "National Trail".

There is also the question of what acronym to use. BNT is widely used in communication and probably 500 times in this magazine.

The acronym NT won't be any good because that belongs to the Northern Territory. But National Trail is short enough there may be no need for an acronym.

Further discussions on this issue will take place at the AGM which will be held on Saturday 17 October 2020 at 10.30am via on-line service.

What's not to like?

THE BNT Facebook page has now 5791 Likes. It serves to pass on information quickly and to lead people to the website.

BNT Facebook Page

The main content has been to share people's past trips for inspiration for the future, book reviews and updating the closures on the Trail.

The page also shares some Bikepacking Australia's and the Horse Trekkers Facebook posts.

Recently the Bicentennial Trail Trekkers group, which now has 167 members, has been formed to discuss, ask questions or share experiences of anything to do with the Trail.

You are very welcome to join especially if you have trekked the trail as your experience is very welcome!

Bicentennial Trail Trekkers

BNT Board positions vacant

THE BNT Board consists of seven directors. At this year's AGM there will be three Board positions vacant.

Prospective Board members must be nominated and seconded by existing financial members.

Board members are required to follow the BNT Constitution and decisions ensuring its governance for BNT members and section coordinators.

Directors take on tasks or projects to improve the BNT and encourage membership.

Duties include attending at bi-monthly meetings via Skype (or more frequently if required); enforcing the Trekking Code when necessary; responding to feedback from section coordinators regarding Trail changes, updates on trekkers and landowners or detours to avoid an unsafe situation; solving problems that cause a break in the Trail's continuity; responding to calls on the 1300 line.

For more information phone 1300 138 724.

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Views expressed are those of the
individuals concerned and do not
necessarily reflect those of the editor or
officers of the Bicentennial National Trail

Snaffle bits



Book review

IN MAY 2004, Liz Byron set off from Cooktown with donkeys Grace and Charley to walk 2500km of the BNT over nine months. It was a rite of passage, embarking on life as a single woman at the age of 61.

Years of drought had left much of her route a dusty wasteland, without food or water for her animals. Years of suffering from childhood abuse and a family tragedy had left her unwilling to ask for help.

In her moving memoir, Liz reveals how she healed herself step by step on the way to her new home in northern NSW – by learning to trust her intuition, the wisdom of her animals and the kindness of strangers.

The Only Way Home
LIZ BYRON
Amazon Kindle \$12.75
Paperback \$22.35

Get started with camel trekking

TARA and Russell Osbourne are world leaders in camel training, handling and psychology.

The couple run the Camel Connection business from their property at Toorloo Arm in East Gippsland.

They help people understand camel psychology and how they

can use this for training, handling and connection with camels.

They specialise in helping new camel owners learn how to handle, train, bond, communicate with and care for camels.

They also help you set up and succeed at camel expeditions.

www.camelconnection.com



A random selection of words led emergency services to where Cornelia Gratzer had broken her leg bushwalking on Flinders Island.

Three words save lives

PEOPLE in trouble in the bush often struggle to communicate their locations to emergency services.

To identify exact locations, **what3words** has divided the world into a grid of 57 trillion blocks, each one three metres square, each with its own unique address.

The service is being used by more than 80 emergency services across the world. This leads to crucial sometimes hours lost when trying to save lives.

“Murky founding spoonfuls” led emergency services to where Cornelia Gratzter had broken her leg in two places while she was bushwalking on Flinders Island.

Ms Gratzter, who had been leading a group from a Melbourne bushwalkers club, was the first person to be rescued using **what3words** in Australia.

When her companions phoned emergency services, the less-experienced walkers struggled to communicate exactly where they were.

Even for an experienced bushwalker, she said longitude and latitude – 16 digits in all – could be hard to remember. “I give up on them,” she said.

Ambulance Tasmania sent a link to get their exact location. Rescue took two hours.

The **what3words** app is on the App Store or Google Play, or www.what3words.com.

Watch out for the mysterious Button Man

TREKKERS on the BNT in the remote Dargo to Wonnangatta region should keep their eye out for the mysterious Button Man who may be a homeless individual living in the bush.

Although he seems to be harmless, nevertheless he has frightened a number of campers in the area when they have encountered him.

He is said to be a flint-hard, expert bushman named for using deer antlers to make buttons and plugs for his ear piercings. He camps where he can see anyone approaching, uses snares to catch deer and hunts with Indigenous-style spears.

Campers and hunters have stories of the Button Man emerging from the dark at campsites. He is described as around 70, with short grey hair, wearing dark jackets and “bloody scary”. Others say he is “spooky”, but no one reports any threats or violence.

He will grill them on why they are there but rarely responds to questions about himself. They say he moves through the toughest terrain with the competence and stamina of someone half his age.

At least eight experienced bushmen have had encounters, with one saying he had a “1,000-metre stare that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up”.

A wildlife photographer spent days taking shots in the area near the Button-Man’s camp. When he returned home and downloaded his photos to his computer there was one unexplained shot of the photographer asleep in his tent.

No one knows who took the photograph ... freaky!



Hats off to H.A. Tipper

PEDDLING a machine he used to win cycle races, H. A. Tipper, member of the Gundagai Bicycle Club, rode 39,000 miles around the world in six years.

From 1908 he visited South Africa, Britain and America, financing his trip with show stunts, such as riding a 10 inch bike made by him for the Sydney Show.

In America he was practically everything except a member of Congress. The show bicycle had a 10-inch frame, was 16 inches from the seat to the ground, and weighed 10lb.

Tipper, who was 6ft. 2in. high, and nearly 14st. in weight, was naturally an object of interest when he rode the bike through the various cities he visited.

Stay in touch without connection

GOFINDME is a real-time GPS tracker that works without cell service. By built-in GPS and long-range radio technology, it allows you to stay in touch with people and provides real time location tracking even if your phone fails.

The device pairs with a mobile phone and can connect with up to 31 other **GoFindMe** units to share real time location, off-grid text and pre-recorded voice messages, one button SOS, geofence status, and meetup requests.

The radio is license-free, no SIM card required or subscription. Two trackers, \$281.00 on indiegogo.com.



A man in a van with a plan

By **BRUCE PARR**

G'day from Bruce, BNT member for just over a year but travelling this magnificent country of ours by foot, bike and vehicle all my 65 years with plans to continue as long as possible.

Mostly in basic self set-up campervans containing a convertible lounge/bed, table, portable ice box (min food, max beer) and recently a small genny to charge my electric mountain bike that replaced my standard bike now I'm an arthritic old fart.

Without this bike I would never have dreamed of tackling such a demanding venture. Also tucked away is my old sailboard enjoyed more often now as a sit-on paddleboard.

A tablet with in-built projector does movies and a rugged tradie-style phone provides GPS navs.

Heating and cooling don't matter as I follow the sun north in winter and south in summer providing my ideal climate of 27 degrees and fine.

I do get caught out though, like on the Trail to the last AGM passing through Ebor, it was snowing! Diverting to a powered van site in Dorrigo I used my small heater for a comfortable night's camp. As reported in BNT TRACKS magazine, the next day was a whiteout so I headed to the coast and warmer weather.

As the "Living Trail" now follows, parallels and crosses so many public roads, using van and bike in a "linked sectional approach" can enable faster, safer



Classic old mine workings on Kingsbrough Trail.

and easier travel whenever, without heavy gear, to wherever and backtrack to my start point.

Then using an alternate route to access the Trail further on, repeat the process in the opposite direction, if possible to my previous turnaround point. And camp in the comfort of the van ... too easy. Bonus is, I get to do the Trail both ways!

I realise this isn't really in the true spirit of the BNT, and I have immense respect and admiration for the skill, courage and tenacity of everyone involved in the creation, use and management of this amazing Trail, but hope it's covered by the category of "different things to many people".

Being born, bred and living in Oz is a gift for which I'm forever grateful, with its endless magnificent places and climates to enjoy my favorite pastimes over the years of camping, bushwalking, surfing, hangliding, sail/paddleboarding, snowskiing and cycling. A highlight of which was a 12-month, 25,000km lap of Oz in my last van.

My most recent trip starting February 2019 from my Sunny Coast home was south on the coast, with plenty of stops for fun,

friends, family and pick up some BNT guidebooks from Belinda at Port Macquarie. On to Merimbula, then inland to my 1980-85 home of Jindabyne to cycle/walk Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko, Thredbo Valley and Cascade Trails.

Filthy weather at Tom Groggin/Khancoban (bntgb11m9,10) so continued on to Albury's beautiful Riverside Sculpture Trail, the Goldfields Track from Castlemaine to Bendigo then met mates at Mildura for a fun three-day Murray River houseboat cruise.

Stayed with the river through Swan Hill and Echuca to the very scenic Murray to Mountains, Mt Buller Epic Alpine, Bright and Mt Beauty trails and camps.

Back over the Snowys via Tooma Rd (bntgb11m6,8) to the coast and north with that detour via Ebor (bntgb7m20), passing back through home in June to pick up my Queensland guidebooks, head further north to the warmth and the start my north-south BNT adventure.

As the old saying goes "a picture speaks a thousand words". So here's a few from Guidebook 1. Cheers!



First stop, The Lion's Den pub at Helenvale.



Ayton camp, Weary Bay, Bloomfield River entrance.



Watermelon Creek croc sighting.



Whyanbeel Creek start - steep and slippery.



Guidebook 01 m08 (ed 2) Start of alternative route back downhill.



Innot Hot Springs - pub, grub and hot tub ... awesome!



Found Herbert River camp but no further Trail.



Rest stop required after the tough Slaty Pinch fixed.





Denise checking the logbook at Grassy Hut, September 2019. RIGHT: Post burnt out after Gaspers Mountain fire.

Hut damaged at Grassy Mountain

FOLLOWING the severe Gaspers Mountain bushfire at the end of last year we feared for the safety of the hut at Grassy Mountain as it is located right in the Wollemi National Park and not far from the source of the fire.

First reports came back from the ranger to say that the hut is still intact as he flew over it in a chopper.

On closer inspection some months later, it was found to be fire damaged and one of the main support posts has been gutted. We are eagerly awaiting a safe

time to access the hut and effect repairs.

This is the second hut built in 2011 that we have constructed on this site. The first being done in 2005 and it was burnt down in a bushfire in 2007. That time there was nothing left but buckled iron and a melted water tank.

The Grassy Mountain campsite breaks up a difficult 35km day and affords the most magnificent views of the Capertee Valley and surrounds.

The BNT remains closed through this area due to both the

fire damage and also as a result of flash flooding after the fire.

Book 9 Maps 9 and 10 Gardens of Stone National Park also remains closed whilst fire and flood damage is being carried out.

We are pleased to be a part of the new edition maps for the entire book 9. Some are almost ready to be released. Watch this space.

MAL and DENISE KEELEY
Section Coordinators
Book 9 Maps 8 to 12

Saddlery sale

STEVE Langley has lived an adventurous life, born to the Sydney slums and waterfront, then onto the sea life roaming the oceans with the Merchant Navy, to eventually finding horses, the bush and the next 40 years riding the land.

Now retiring from his trekking business in Glen Innes, NSW, Steve has for sale a pack saddle for \$3,500, saddles average \$300 and assorted saddlery items. This is an excellent opportunity to



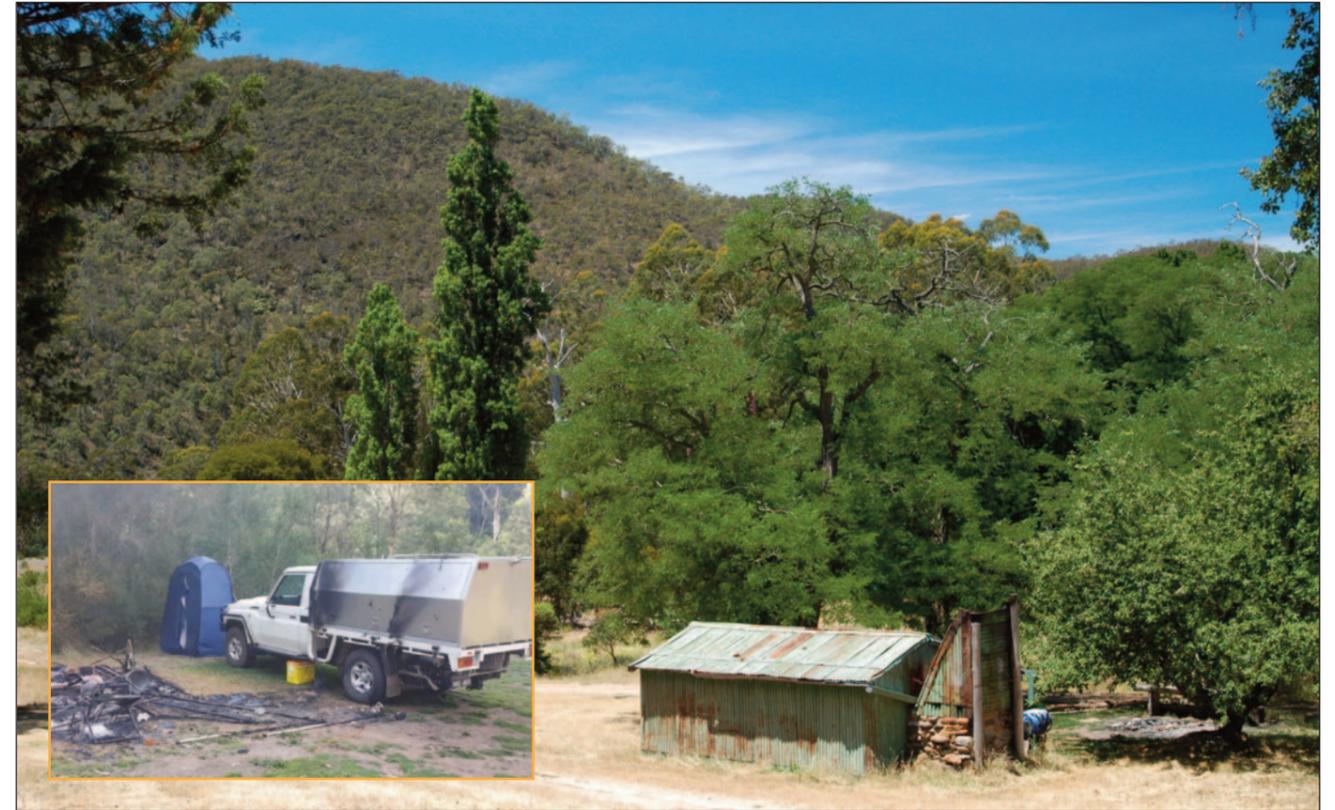
equip yourself for the Bicentennial National Trail.

Steve met Dan Seymour when he was exploring the BNT for R M Williams. He also has some maps and local knowledge he would pass on free to a buyer.



All saddlery is excellent quality and condition and maintained with regular oiling of the leather.

Potential buyers welcome to inspect, please ring for an appointment. 0417 452 649.



Wonnangatta Cattle Station. INSET: The missing couple's burnt-out camp and four-wheel-drive.

Another Wonnangatta mystery

TWO ELDERLY campers missing from Wonnangatta on the BNT in Victoria's high country since March have replicated the mystery of the infamous Wonnangatta murders of a century ago.

There has been no sign of Russell Hill, 74, and Carol Clay, 73, since they left their campsite, which was later discovered burnt down and their four-wheel-drive, scorched but still working.

"The area is incredibly remote and there is a possibility that they have suffered some misadventure in the bush," a police spokesman said. "But we also need to rule out any possibility of foul play."

Mr Hill left his Drouin home on March 19 for a camping trip across several sites along the Dargo River in Victoria's north-east and planned to leave the region on March 26.

He has not been heard from since March 20, after making radio contact from Wonnangatta. Mr Hill's wife Robyn, 71, said she had thought her husband was going camping alone.

Mr Hill worked in the logging industry and was familiar with the area. His disappearance is out of character, police say.

A century ago, Wonnangatta Station manager Jim Barclay was found murdered and buried in a creek bed in the valley.

His employee John Bamford was missing and presumed the culprit. But later Bamford's body was discovered hidden under a log on nearby Mt Howitt. The mystery has never been resolved.

Transporting Bamford's body from Mt Howitt.



Russell Hill and Carol Clay.





Former businessman John Elliott with one of his camels.

Western Star

Have camel will travel

AFTER 10 years of a career as an award-winning entrepreneur, John Elliott walked away from a seemingly successful life, gave away his dream car and resigned as CEO from his own company to travel with five camels and a dog.

“I walked away from my house, my regular wage and my creature comforts,” Mr Elliott said.

“Now I’m redefining success on my own terms.

“I have embarked on a journey for the next few years town-to-town around Australia and the world, entertaining the most exciting, dangerous and challenging experiences I can find or make up, connecting with locals to understand how they design their life and happiness.

“Speaking to people from different cultures and walks of life and unlocking real stories of success and happiness and inspiring people to challenge the future they feel locked into.”

Originally heading for Western Australia, leading camels Ted, Jackson, Arthur, Bill, and Charlie, he decided to further investigate the eastern states through communities from Narrabri to Tallangatta to Mansfield.

Everywhere he goes, people forget their worries to chat, offer him beers and a place to stay.

Mr Elliott encountered trouble in early May, when emergency services rescued three of the camels after falling down a cliff near Jamieson.

Strangers have donated to beardseason.com, the melanoma charity Mr Elliott supports, or thanked him for distracting them from the drought, or family illness.

Mr Elliott bought the camels in Queensland from Russell Osborne of Camel Connection, who mentors camel owners, lovers and want-to-be owners, and spent eight months preparing before starting his trek in April last year.

Draft NSW Crown Land strategy out

THE NSW government has released a draft strategy for the management of Crown Lands.

Some 42% of land in NSW is Crown Land, more than 80% of which is leasehold grazing properties in the Western Division. The rest includes reserves such as Travelling Stock Reserves which the BNT uses, showgrounds and racecourses, etc.

Community submissions on the draft closed on August 20, but the document was largely motherhood statements about directions such as consultation with Indigenous groups over land claims.

It will be worth keeping an eye on the government over the next couple of years if they are thinking of changing Crown Land management, to make sure they are not closing roads and selling reserves as a way of revenue raising.

[Download draft Crown Lands strategy](#) ▼



Citizen science

FOR ME, trips on the Bicentennial National Trail have always been enhanced by getting up close and dirty with the locals. The local flora and fauna, that is.

Trekking pace is ideal for seeing and hearing, noticing and investigating, not just the wide open spaces, but the minutia, the tiny wildflowers, bugs and beetles, the scats and prints, the sounds of frog and bird calls.

With phone in hand, I can support research and help build scientific data. This can then be used to conserve the environment, pinpoint funding, change land use, and much more.

There are a number of apps which can be downloaded before a trip. **OzAtlas** allows me to record sightings of flora, fauna and fungi.

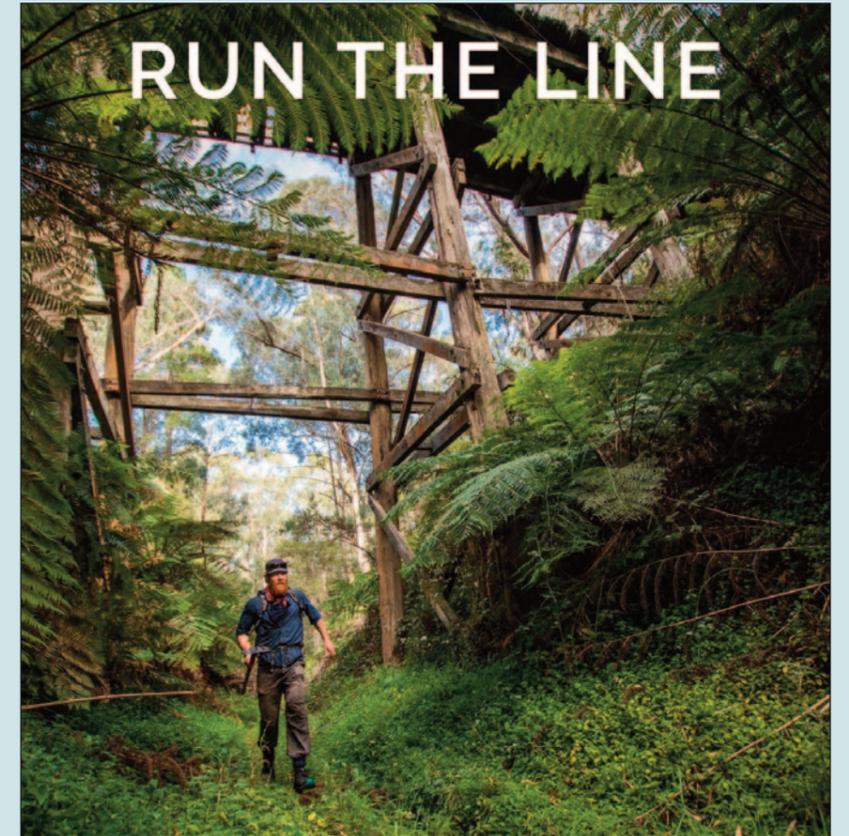
FrogID helps to identify and count frogs from the sounds heard. **Birdata** and **iNaturalist** also allow me to identify and enter data for a huge range of plants and animals.

To get involved with projects around the world, citizen scientists play a crucial part in sifting data already collected.

You can choose from identifying marsupials which have been caught on camera in fire affected areas, to transcribing diaries of ornithologists in America from 1913.

DigiVol.ala.org.au is always welcoming new volunteers.

LESLEY HAINE



Movie review

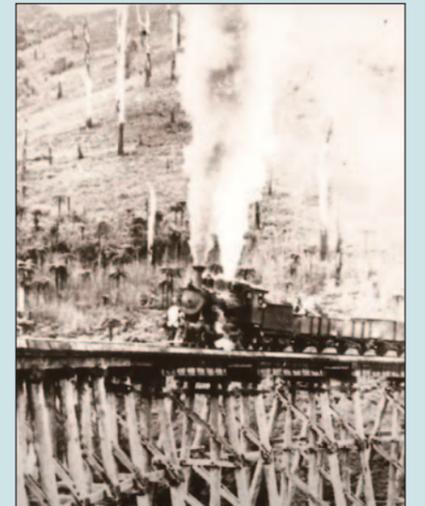
BEAU Miles lives next to the old Warragul-Noojee Railway line, which snaked for 43km through the foothills of Mt Baw Baw from 1892-1954.

You can still see the line now as strange scars across paddocks and bold cuttings through the sides of hills. Overgrown, private, exposed, hard to find.

Beau runs the rail line, picking up and finding the stations of yesteryear. Setting off with shovel in hand and dressed like a 50s train driver, running end to end as the first human passing for 60 years.

Police, fences, blackberries, runner musings and leftover pasta map Beau against a warm autumn day as he makes his way across a landscape he’s lived in his whole life.

Run the Line won the People’s Choice award at the 2019 Port Fairy Adventure Film Festival.



[Watch movie](#) ▼

What's stopping you?

By [STEF GEBBIE](#)

MANY people have dreams of embarking on an epic journey. Sometimes these dreams have been with us from childhood; sometimes they strike out of the blue.

Sometimes they influence life decisions for decades; sometimes these dreams are private things that may be dramatically different to how we live our day to day lives.

But the soul-crushing truth is that only a minority of people who dream of epic expeditions will actually undertake them. What stops people from leaving home and taking to the road fascinates me.

No doubt the reasons for staying home are as diverse as the reasons for dreaming up a wild journey in the first place. We may have family commitments and the pressures that come with them.

We may be financially constrained, committed to paying off a mortgage, or prioritise career progression over the realisation of our expedition dreams.

We might fear disparaging remarks from peers or feel social pressure to “achieve real goals.” Time may simply get away from us, and suddenly decades have passed and we still haven't set out. We might face unexpected events such as a pandemic that throw our plans out the window (hello, 2020!).

We may fear that we lack the skills, the determination, the grit, or the endurance to succeed.

We may get stuck in the planning stage, unable to factor all possible eventualities into our spreadsheets and route-planning notes, feeling as though we don't have enough information to set out yet.

We may lie awake at night doubting and asking ourselves horrible questions like, “What makes you think you can succeed at such an audaciously epic undertaking?”

All these things may work together to keep us at home and prevent us from taking to the road. But it seems like a lot of these reasons are based in fear. Fear of failure, of social criticism, of change.

The truth is, we will never be able to plan for all eventualities. There comes a time when we have to take a deep breath, know we have done everything we can, and then take a chance.

There will always be more knowledgeable and skilled people out there that probably do things better than we do.

There will always be people in our lives who don't understand our motivations and kind of raise their eyebrows when we mention our plans.

There will always be people who see us riding down the road and say, “Ha! What a waste of a life.”

There will always be more to learn. We will always make mistakes.

But none of these things are reasons to stay home. The only valid reason to stay home is COVID-19, and as that dies down and travel becomes the joyfully easy thing it used to be,

I hope everyone who has ever had a dream of long-distance horse travel takes to the road and realises one thing: the world belongs to those on horseback.

[Road Horse blog](#) ▼





New National Trail maps

By **ROB MCLAREN**
Map Coordinator

How did the new maps come about?

THE project was a result of the Board's Strategic Review in mid-March 2020. A template map was confirmed following a two-month consultative review. In the last three months a team of four (editor-in-chief, the appropriate section coordinator, a topographer and a graphic designer) has updated an unprecedented 28 maps from two guidebooks.

What do they look like?

THE PDF files are designed to be printed at A3 size (twice an A4 page and four times the size of current guidebook maps). In the two examples below, map features include:

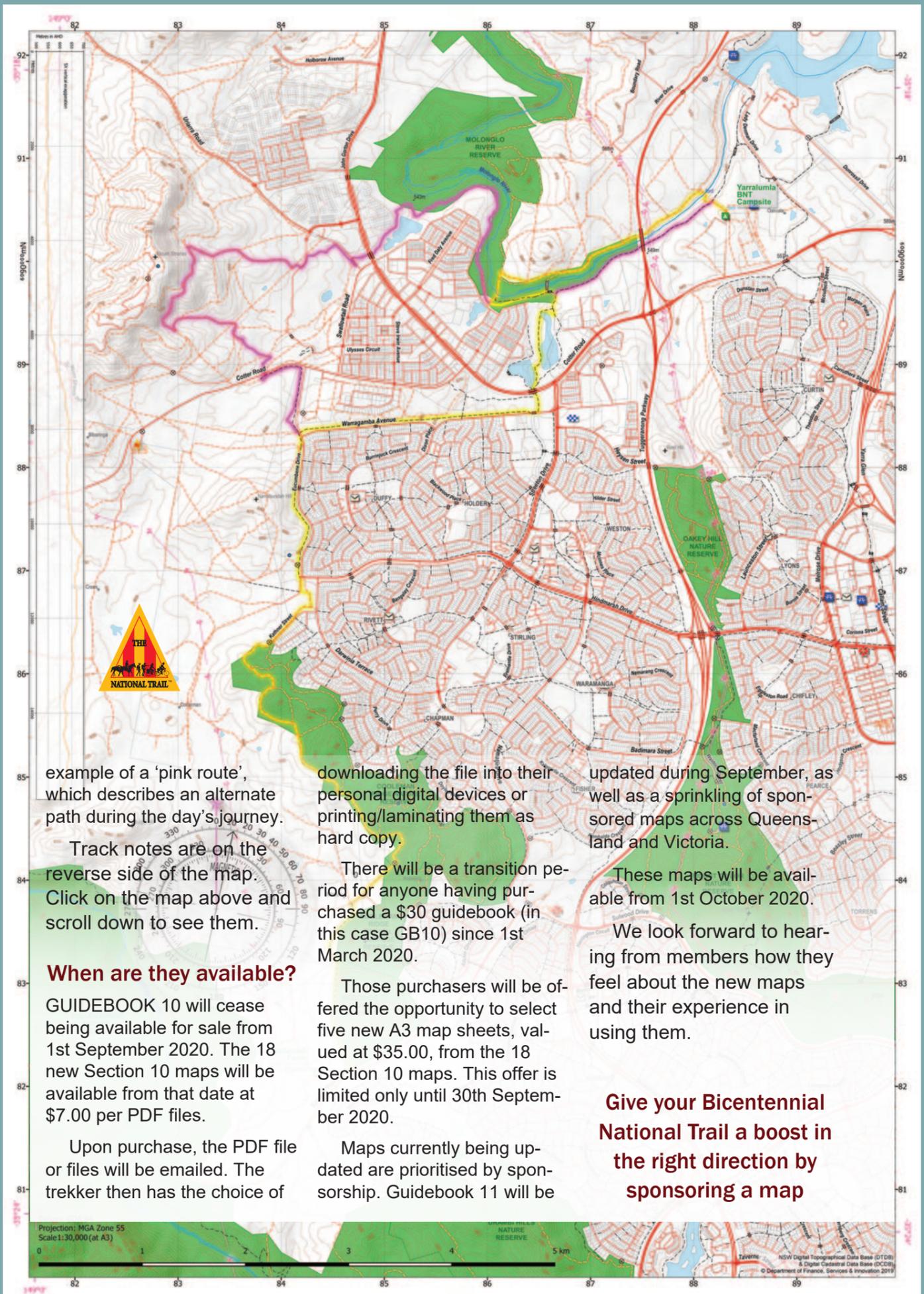
- Map title includes camp to camp
- 'Updated as at' date
- Copyrights, warnings and disclaimers
- Elevation along the length of Trail travelled on that map

Map 10-5 Wiarborough Creek - Taralga (or Section 10

Map 5 or old Guidebook 10 Map 4) is an example of a predominantly rural map, with one camp in a town.

This map is not sponsored but seeks to invite sponsors (at \$200 per year). This map includes a warning for travelling stock reserves (TSR) or private property access permission a number of days ahead if appropriate.

Map 10-14 Yarralumla - Westwood Farm, Kambah (or Section 10 Map 14 or old Guidebook 10 Map 13a) is an example of a predominantly urban map, which includes a sponsor. This map has an



example of a 'pink route', which describes an alternate path during the day's journey.

Track notes are on the reverse side of the map. Click on the map above and scroll down to see them.

When are they available?

GUIDEBOOK 10 will cease being available for sale from 1st September 2020. The 18 new Section 10 maps will be available from that date at \$7.00 per PDF files.

Upon purchase, the PDF file or files will be emailed. The trekker then has the choice of

downloading the file into their personal digital devices or printing/laminating them as hard copy.

There will be a transition period for anyone having purchased a \$30 guidebook (in this case GB10) since 1st March 2020.

Those purchasers will be offered the opportunity to select five new A3 map sheets, valued at \$35.00, from the 18 Section 10 maps. This offer is limited only until 30th September 2020.

Maps currently being updated are prioritised by sponsorship. Guidebook 11 will be

updated during September, as well as a sprinkling of sponsored maps across Queensland and Victoria.

These maps will be available from 1st October 2020.

We look forward to hearing from members how they feel about the new maps and their experience in using them.

Give your Bicentennial National Trail a boost in the right direction by sponsoring a map

The Falls Country



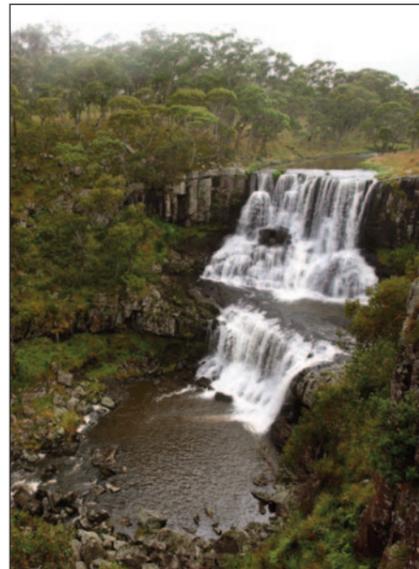
TOP: BNT camp Newton Boyd.
RIGHT: Broadwater Station; Ebor Falls
BELOW: Les O'Neil mustering camp;
Ebor Falls frozen.

THE BNT between Barrington Tops and the Queensland border crosses what locals call the "Falls Country" where young rivers cascade over the Great Escarpment in many beautiful waterfalls.

Trekking in this country is breathtaking but challenging. Kunderang Brook and the upper Macleay River; the Guy Fawkes wilderness; and Rocky River are rugged and isolated, testing your physical and planning capabilities.

From drought and bushfire to floods and snowfalls; the diversity of weather extremes is matched by the richness of natural environments you will pass through – from tropical rainforest to meandering rivers then alpine snow gums.

ROGER FRYER



Section Coordinator profile

Section 11 – Yaouk to Providence Portal

PETER Cochran is a fifth generation Mountain Cattleman of Yaouk Valley, Adaminaby, NSW and is coordinator of Section 11 Yaouk to Providence Portal.

Peter has been providing travelling advice and refuge for BNT trekkers and their equipment and steeds at his property at Yaouk for over 25 years and is highly experienced in the conditions in the mountains.

He is principal partner of **Cochran Horse Treks** and has been operating the business for over 20 years. For 18 of those years every year in March/April he takes groups of up to 20 riders on a 150km trek over seven days from Yaouk along the BNT to Khancoban to attend the Man from Snowy River Festival in Corryong.

From Yaouk the track takes the riders into Kosciuszko National Park to Wares Yards for the first night and then on to Providence Portal for the second night. This country is timbered with some open frost gullies and brumbies can occasionally be seen among the trees. There are clean creeks in the gullies.

From Providence Portal the next day crosses the Eucumbene River at dawn and then up into the alpine country toward Table Top. The group travels across Happy Jacks with Lunch overlooking the River. They then ride down to the confluence of the Tumut River and Happy Jacks River before crossing the 15 Mile Spur for a photo opportunity with Jagungal in the distance.

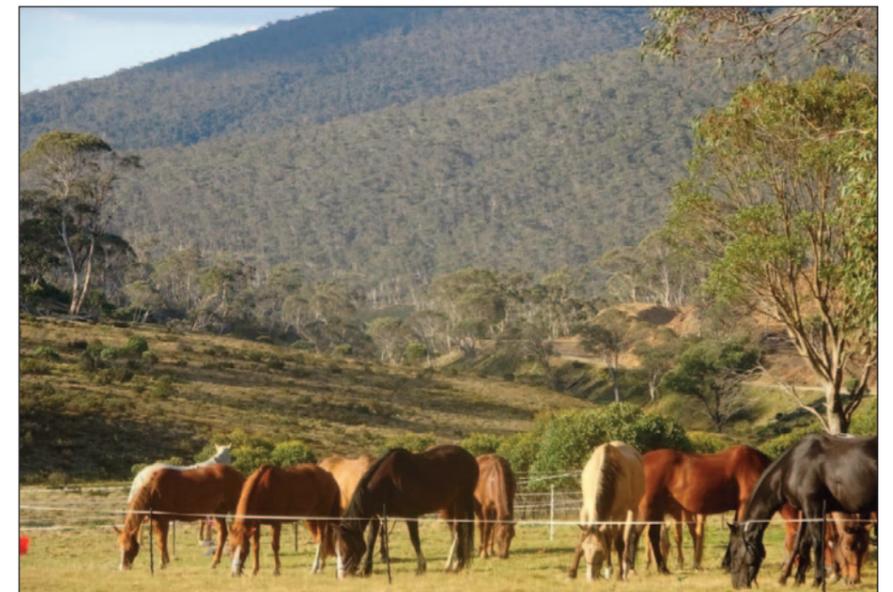
Following the Man from Snowy River Festival in Corryong in 2021 they plan to ride south on the BNT from Khancoban via Geehi to Tom Groggin. They have done a few fact finding trips since the



ABOVE: Peter and Bucky at Tom Groggin campground, showing no fire damage.

BELOW: Trek horses at Wares Yards.

L. Holland and J. Melville



fires and were very pleased to hear from a park ranger that Boardman's Run was cleared and repaired in the weeks after the fires. There is minimal damage in

the shadow of the western fall and what damage is there is recovering well and the higher rainfall in the area will assist with the recovery.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THE BICENTENNIAL NATIONAL TRAIL
10.30am SATURDAY 17th OCTOBER 2020
via online technology

Nominations for the Board of Directors
of The Bicentennial National Trail Ltd

Nominations for the Board of Directors to be submitted on this
form and received by Friday 25th September 2020.

PO Box 55, Gundagai NSW 2722
Alternatively scan and email to:
info@bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au

Please provide and attach a brief profile of the nominee.

We/I (Nominator)

(Secunder)

Being a current financial member/s of the
Bicentennial National Trail Ltd hereby nominate:

.....

For the position of

On the Board of Directors of Bicentennial National Trail Ltd.

Nominator's signature:

Date:

Secunder's signature:

Date:

Nominee name in full:

I accept this nomination:

Nominee's signature:

Date:

Proxy Form

The Bicentennial National Trail Ltd

Proxy Forms to be submitted on this form and received by
Friday 25th September 2020.

Returning Officer, PO Box 55 Gundagai, NSW 2722

Or scan and email info@bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au

I

of

Being a member of the above named company hereby appoint:

.....

of

Or failing him/her the Chairperson as my proxy to vote for me on
my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the company to be
held on Saturday 17th October 2020 via online technology and at
any adjournment thereof.

SIGNED this day of

.....

* Strike out whichever is not desired. Note: In the event of the
member desiring to vote for or against any resolution, he shall
instruct his proxy accordingly. Unless otherwise instructed, the
proxy may vote as he thinks fit. Clubs have two delegates,
therefore entitled to two votes.

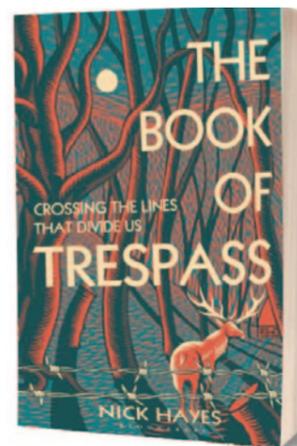
Annual General Meeting online

THIS YEAR, we were initially looking to hold the Annual General Meeting of the BNT in Canberra. However, with the impacts and uncertainties with Covid-19 across the country and the ongoing changes to travel arrangements between states and territories, this means we may not be able to gather as a group as we would have liked.

We appreciate many of you look forward to the AGM to catch up with friends and discuss what is happening along the trail. As many of you travel far to attend the weekend, we thought best to let you know at this stage, we will be holding the AGM online via technology – like Zoom or similar service.

Details of the technology being used will be communicated to all separately, as this is still being arranged. If circumstances improve in the interim and enough notification can be provided to you, we will try to facilitate a face-to-face meeting.

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday 17 October 2020 at 10.30am via online service.



Keep out!

BY LAW of trespass, Englanders are excluded from 92 per cent of the land and 97 per cent of its waterways, blocked by walls whose legitimacy is rarely questioned. But behind them lies a story of enclosure, exploitation and dispossession of public rights whose effects last to this day.

The Book of Trespass takes us on a journey over the walls of England, into the thousands of square miles of rivers, woodland, lakes and meadows that are blocked from public access.

By trespassing the land of the media magnates, Lords, politicians and private corporations that own England, Nick Hayes argues that the root of social inequality is the uneven distribution of land.

Weaving together the stories of poachers, vagabonds, gypsies, witches, hippies, ravers, rambles, migrants and protestors, and acts of civil disobedience that challenge orthodox power at its heart, *The Book of Trespass* will transform the way you see the land.

The Book of Trespass
NICK HAYES Bloomsbury
\$22 Kindle, \$25 hard cover
on Amazon

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"I didn't realise I was a contortionist until I got a tick on my bum!"

Bushwalking with a furca



THE SARCINA was a marching pack carried by Roman legionaries on a wooden pole called a furca, with tools, camping gear and food for several days.

Now, ultra-light hikers have revived the furca and are finding it a handy, comfortable and adaptable alternative to the traditional rucksack. **Check it out:**



ABOVE: Roman sarcina.
LEFT: Modern-day furca.

Eastern Ranges Trail ambassadors

THE EASTERN Ranges Trail helps existing trails like the BNT to engage with the communities they pass through. To develop the concept, the ERT is seeking ambassadors to weave this engagement into their treks.

Instead of just passing through, linking your trek with local services such as transport, accommodation and work, supporting environmental causes or volunteering, and side adventures such as kayaking or gliding, will ensure local support. Your experience will be significantly enhanced beyond what otherwise could be an arduous and lonely adventure.

Providing tools to plan your personalised trek, to seek ways to finance it like sponsorships, and to raise money for worthy causes, the ERT is free to join, and there are no rules or special requirements.



Please have a look around the ERT website and use the contact form to speak to the administrators about getting in the front seats as this useful initiative takes off.

The Eastern Ranges Trail will make your trek easier and more fun, and the communities you encounter will welcome you and remember you for long afterwards.

www.easternrangestrail.org



LEFT: A ranger-guided tour leaving for the Kosciuszko summit in 1964. ABOVE: Stock illegally moved into the park after grazing leases ended in 1958. BELOW: Cattle grazing at Club Lake believed to be during the Federation Drought (1897-1903).

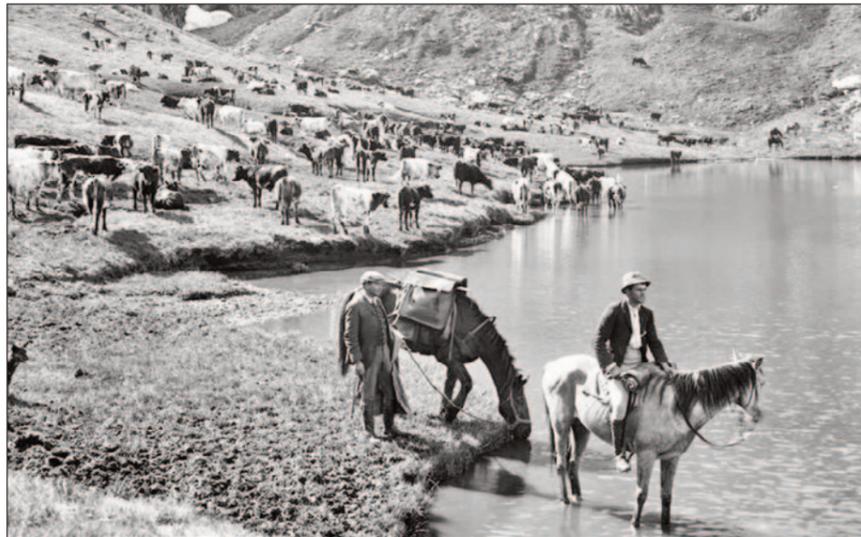
Kosciuszko a great national park

ORIGINALLY the home of three Aboriginal groups, the Ngarigo, Walgalu and Djilamatang people, the Snowy Mountains are described in a new book by Graeme Worboys and Deirdre Slattery.

They detail how squatters with cattle occupied the region from the 1820s. By 1840, the Snowy region had been stocked with 200,000 sheep, 75,000 cattle and 3,000 horses which grazed in the mountains each summer.

Kosciuszko State Park – later Kosciuszko National Park – was proclaimed in 1944. A decade of further scientific research led to the end of summer grazing leases above 1,350 metres in 1958.

Soon after rangers started impounding stock found illegally in the park, an effigy of a park ranger swinging from a hangman's noose was installed on the veranda of the Jindabyne Hotel.



The plan of management for Kosciuszko National Park has been updated frequently to accommodate more tourism facilities, and the threat of further development is also coming via Snowy 2.0, a A\$5 billion proposal to expand the current hydroelectric scheme.

**Kosciuszko:
A Great National Park
Dr GRAEME WORBOYS
and DEIRDRE SLATTERY
Envirobook
\$74.99**

Changes to track Boggy Creek-Jenolan Map 14

DUE to logging, the trail will be redirected from Duckmaloi Road onto Boggy Creek Road for a period of six months to a year from this month.

We have spoken with Forest Service and as far as we know trekkers will still be able to use the Boggy Creek campsite.

We are awaiting markers to arrive so that we can remark and measure distances.

We highly advise that trekkers contact us before starting this area.

Thank you.

Hazel and Martin McCort

From the Chair

From Page 2

The Board is endeavouring to increase awareness of the Trail, improve the quality and accessibility of our mapping and other resources, and ensure that we remain financially viable and healthy. We are particularly looking for any members who have marketing or IT expertise. Prospective Board members must be nominated and seconded by existing financial members.

Following on from the outcomes of our recent survey, there will be a vote at the AGM on changing the name of the Trail from the 'Bicentennial National Trail' to the 'National Trail'. With the Bicentennial celebrations now almost 40 years behind us, it is felt that the relevance of the word 'bicentennial' is dated and obscure, particularly to younger people.

The name 'National Trail' also opens the way to extending the Trail. It is not hard to envisage a truly National Trail that loops all the way around Australia.

A few members have asked 'what about the acronym?', which is certainly a valid question, however, many of us who have been using the new name for a while have skipped using an acronym and are finding that the term 'National Trail' rolls off the tongue pretty readily.

The Board has made significant progress on developing a National Trail Strategic Plan, which will drive the direction of our organisation over the next five years. The Strategic Plan will explain to our members and the rest of the world, our purpose and will set tasks and targets for the Board. Once approved by our members, the Strategic Plan will also be used to help seek additional funding.



In response to frequent requests for a navigational app for the Trail, we have been investigating several alternatives. We have begun negotiating with the Australian representatives of Guthook Guides. Some of you may be familiar with the Guthook Guides app which was developed by three American hikers, Ryan (Guthook) Linn and Paul and Alice Bodnar.

This app already covers a number of well-known trails worldwide including some in Australia. The app is regarded as an excellent navigational and planning tool. An app user can touch the Trail at any two locations and find the distance between them as well as the total ascent and descent. Waypoints can be created on points of interest and businesses that are on or support the Trail.

Where the Trail goes through towns with relevant facilities or special sites, they can be earmarked. Waypoints can be camp sites, water locations, accommodation, cafes, farmstays, food drop off or transfer providers, points of interest etc, etc. Waypoints can also collect and share stories associated with places along the Trail. The app will also allow trekkers to report any damage to the Trail or its infrastructure, as well as other relevant information such as water level/quality.

Trekkers using the app will be also able to share their location

and progress with family and friends without needing to send or receive emails. Trekkers progress on the app can be updated whenever they are in mobile contact. However, it is important that users of the app take maps and know how to use a compass. As the suppliers of the app note: "the smartest thing in the hiking group must not be the smartphone".

Adopting the Guthook Guides app would help ensure the National Trail is part of an international stable of trails. This would enable the National Trail to be included in local and international marketing campaigns

The app is free to download and a small section of Trail is offered for free to demonstrate how the app works. Maps of other trails can be purchased in the app which activates it's functionality.

The Board would like to encourage members to have a look at the Guthook Guides app or hear from anyone who has experience with this app and provide us with any feedback. At this stage we are planning to commence our foray into navigational apps in tandem with the move to downloadable A3 maps.

As always, the Board would like to acknowledge and thank our many volunteer section coordinators, Dr Nicky Austin our mapping guru, our IT/website wizards Vincent Brouillet and Lance Williams, Roger Fryer for his exceptional effort in producing 'Tracks' and the engine room for our financial, membership and sales management the exceptionally patient Karen Carter.

Thanks also to my Board colleagues for their hard work and support.

All the best

**NEIL WARD
0419 010 744**

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property 'Karamea'
No access or coverage for
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VICTORIA

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Director: Kath Ryan
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Pioneers of the High Country

From Page 24

Around the same time the Pendergasts brought cattle to Benambra and Edmund Buckley took up Tongiomungie. With no land outlet, they drove stock back to Eden to ship them out of Twofold Bay.

Not all these pioneers stayed. Some moved on and some retired to let others run their properties. But one family remained and the name Pendergast is synonymous with high country grazing.

John, Thomas, William and James Pendergast were born at Wollombi, NSW, to an Irish/Welsh immigrant. When they matured, these skilled bushmen moved to the newly discovered Monaro and Omeo districts, claiming land at Cooma and Moonbah, then 25,000 acres at Lake Omeo.

Supplies were packed in the 163 miles from Eden, and surplus fat bullocks sold to the boiling down works there. Two acres of wheat were sown by hand-digging with a spade, cut with a sickle and threshed with a flail.



Cornelius, William, John and James Pendergast at Omeo in 1837.

More relatives arrived from Campbelltown and had more sons with repetitive names so there were Pendergasts all over the place, in particular William, James and John, who were given the Omeo property by the original John Snr.

A severe winter killed most of their cattle and James left to work packing supplies and catching and breaking wild horses which were already proliferating.

With the money he earned, James brought Herefords to the mountains, which were harder than the previous Shorthorns.

There were so many Pendergasts with the same name, they improvised with names like Big Jack, Little Jack, Black Jack, Omeo Jack and Swampy Jack.

Contributions

BNT TRACKS welcomes contributions. We are looking for photos, news items, snippets, poems, stories and particularly treks and other activities carried out on the Trail.

Contributions are cursorily edited but largely style and correct English is the responsibility of the writer – thus retaining the original flavour of the text as the author intends.

Phone 0427 559 575 for advertising rates. Deadline for next issue January 30. The magazine is direct mailed to 1000 subscribers.

tracks@nationaltrail.com.au

When James Pendergast first came to the district the bush country was fairly open, but the demise of Aboriginal burning, ringbarking and subsequent wild fires made the remnant eucalypts sucker from the stumps and a lot of it became impenetrable scrub.

Most of the country from the Monaro to Limestone Creek in Victoria was held by the three brothers, but when the Barry Act came into force, the best of the land was selected by others. James Pendergast died aged 87 in 1924. The surviving clan went by names such as Long Will, Weary Will, Young Jack, Old Jim, Young Jim, Kimberley Jim, Black Jim and Courty Jim.

There are of course many other names associated with the mountains, such as the O'Rourkes of Suggan Buggan, the Rogers of Ingeegoodbie, the Guys of Crooked River, the Bennies of Rose River, the Frys of the Howqua, the Treasures of Dargo and the Lovicks of Howqua, whose property was used in *The Man from Snowy River* movie.

Some of these names are gone and some endure, but the mountains remain as formidable as ever.

ROGER FRYER

Pioneers of the High Country

THE expansion of grazier pioneers in Australia occurred quite quickly, beginning in the mid-1820s as population swelled and entrepreneurs realised the potential for huge wool profits.

This was common throughout the world as emigration from European and Asian countries increased. Open rangelands which did not need development like clearing, fencing and pasture improvement were particularly sought to supply the wealthy English cloth industries.

Once the Blue Mountains were breached and the rich Bathurst plains discovered, free settlers, native-born and English investors rushed to occupy Australia's abundant cleared areas – both natural and maintained by Aboriginal burning – leapfrogging each other and moving further out past already occupied country.

By the mid-1830s it was in full swing, with young native-born men from the Hunter River pioneering the Liverpool Plains, Darling Downs, New England and the Clarence and Richmond Rivers.

To the south they found the vast Monaro plains which were easily grasped with access from Sydney via the Goulburn and Canberra districts. Once there, however, discovery was slowed by the barrier of the Snowy Mountains and Victorian Alps.

Sealers and whalers had been operating out of Twofold Bay on the southeast coast elbow for some time, with only sea access, and the Victorian eastern coast was unoccupied. There was little



Horse-drawn covered wagon at Omeo.

good land in the mountains themselves, but explorers pressed on until they encountered the rich grasslands of the Omeo and Benambra districts.

George Mackillop forced his way through this border country to Omeo in 1835, followed by the Pendergasts, the O'Rourkes, Edward Baylis and John Wilkinson. Then Angus McMillan opened up the new province of Gippsland.

McMillan's legacy was later tarnished however with reports he led a massacre of 150 Aborigines after his mate Macalister was killed by a member of the Yuan tribe. He was also implicated in a further five massacres.

Captain Mark John Currie RN crossed the Limestone Plains, where Canberra stands today, in 1823. He moved on to the open country south, known as the 'Monaroo'. Squatters followed, and by 1837 the Monaro was populated by about 1500 people.

Count Strzelecki explored the Snowy Mountains region, culminating in his ascent of Mt Kosciuszko in 1840. with another explorer, Lhotske, actually sighting the mountain first.

On the western approach to the Alps, men such as John Mitchell, George Gray, James

Brown and John Wells journeyed to the Bogong High Plains, Cobungra and the Gibbo Range (Victoria) seeking new pastures.

In 1839 Terrence Murray of Yarralumla (the property that became Government House in Canberra) was using a route over the Brindabella Mountains to establish outstations for cattle on the high plains of what is today Kosciuszko National Park.

There was little market for beef at first, but cattle travelled better than sheep in rough country and some return could be made by boiling them down for tallow. The important thing was to stock new country so it could be claimed.

Supply routes from the north were too long so a pack-horse trail was forced from Twofold Bay along an Indigenous route known as the Bundian Way.

In 1841 the NSW Governor employed McMillan to find a route from the Monaro Plains over the mountains to Omeo and down to Port Albert for farmers to send produce to the lucrative markets of Tasmania. The Ingeegoodbee Track headed south from Jindabyne, descending a spur called Jacobs Ladder before crossing the Snowy River. It was another Indigenous route.